

The Role of Government in Reducing Stunting

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the role of the government in efforts to reduce the prevalence of stunting in Driyorejo District, Gresik Regency, with a focus on the implementation of the Foster Father Program and Food Assistance. Stunting, which is caused by chronic malnutrition, has a negative impact on child growth and development and is one of the main health problems in Indonesia. This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach with data collection through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. The results show that the government plays an active role in facilitating synergy between various parties, including the community, private sector, and local government institutions, to reduce stunting rates. On the other hand, the Food Assistance program focuses on the distribution of nutritious food to families at risk of stunting, in collaboration with institutions such as the Post Office and Baznas. Both programs are equipped with periodic measurements of child growth by health cadres using adequate tools. The conclusion of this study confirms that the role of the government in Driyorejo District, through strengthening cross-sector coordination and community participation, has had a positive impact on reducing the prevalence of stunting. However, the sustainability of this program requires budget support, community education, and ongoing evaluation to ensure long-term effectiveness.

Keywords: Role, Government, Stunting, Reduction

A. INTRODUCTION

Stunting is one of the global nutritional challenges and issues currently faced by communities around the world. The Global Nutritional Report 2018 reported that there are approximately 150.8 million (22.2%) stunted toddlers, which is a major factor hindering human development worldwide. The World Health Organization (WHO) has identified five stunting prevalence regions, including Southeast Asia where Indonesia is located. (Risnawati and Munafiah 2022) Indonesia is one of the countries with a very high rate of stunting among toddlers. About 37% (nearly 9 million) of toddlers are stunted (Basic Health Research/Riskesdas 2013). This chronic malnutrition has become a major responsibility for the Jokowi-Ma'ruf administration, which has set a target to reduce the stunting rate to 14% by the end of its term. Nationally, the stunting prevalence rate is still at 24.4%, far above the limit set by the WHO, which is below 20%. (Wardah and Reynaldi 2022) Stunting in toddlers can hinder child development and other negative impacts such as reduced intellectual capacity, vulnerability to non-communicable diseases, decreased productivity, leading to poverty, and the risk of giving birth to low-birth-weight babies (Unicef, 2013). Moreover, nutritional problems, especially short stature in children, impede young people's development, with negative impacts that will persist later in life. Existing studies indicate that stunted children are strongly associated with poor educational achievements, reduced duration of education, and lower adult earnings. Stunted children are more likely to grow into less educated,

poorer, unhealthier adults, more prone to non-communicable diseases. Therefore, stunted children are widely accepted as a poor predictor of the quality of human resources, which further reduces a nation's future productive capacity. Thus, acceleration in addressing stunting, in accordance with Presidential Regulation No. 72/2021, is essential to achieve health, intelligence, and human productivity, as well as sustainable development goals.

Regarding stunting mitigation policies in Indonesia, the Ministry of Health has expanded the areas for intervention implementation. By 2020, this will cover 260 districts/cities, continuously expanding until all districts are targeted by 2024. (Rahmadani and Lubis 2023) Looking at the provincial level, according to the 2022 Indonesian Nutritional Status Survey (SSGI), East Java Province has a stunting prevalence of 19.2%. At the district level, according to the SSGI 2022 data, Gresik Regency ranks 33rd with a stunting prevalence of 10.7%. In 2023, Gresik Regency successfully reduced its stunting prevalence rate from 23.5% to 10.7%. This was not solely the role of the Health Department, but all department heads and community health centers in Gresik Regency contributed to reducing stunting prevalence. (Sholikhah and Rahma 2022) One of the institutions involved in reducing stunting at the local government level, specifically in Gresik Regency, is the Health Department, which has conducted a stunting forum as part of the regent's initiative to reduce stunting in Gresik Regency. This forum serves as a platform for presenting situational analysis results or declaring the local government's commitment and agreeing on intervention plans, also promoting local government commitment to integrated stunting reduction. This event also includes discussions on providing supplementary feeding and promoting fish consumption along with related departments to accelerate stunting reduction in Gresik Regency. Not only the Health Department but also other local government organizations, such as sub-district heads, village heads of stunting monitoring locations, heads of community health centers, family planning coordinators at the sub-district level, and community posyandu cadres, are involved. One of the activities carried out in Gresik Regency to address stunting is the internal stunting audit with villages targeted for stunting focus in Gresik Regency. The current stunting reduction activities in Gresik Regency are focused in Driyorejo Subdistrict, as in 2023 it had the highest stunting prevalence in Gresik Regency with 208 stunted toddlers, compared to 152 toddlers in 2022.

Cannot be separated from the role of government the term "role" is one we often hear and use in everyday life, yet sometimes people know the word but do not fully understand its meaning. Etymologically, a role implies an action performed by a person that is expected by others in society. This means that every action an individual takes has significant meaning for some people. Soerjono Soekanto (1987:221) defines a role as indicating more of a function, an adjustment, and as a process. It precisely means that an individual occupies a position or place in society and performs a role. Meanwhile, Poerwodarminta (1995: 571) states, "a role is an action taken by an individual or a group of people in an event." According to Poerwodarminta, this action performed in an event represents a set of behaviors expected to be exhibited by someone who holds a societal position. (Aditya et al., 2019)

The Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language defines a role as a set of behaviors that should be exhibited by someone who holds a position in society, and in its noun form (peranan), it means actions performed by an individual in an event (Amba, 1998:23) cited in (Mokalu, Nayoan, and Sampe 2021). Amba further states that a role is a concept used in sociology to understand the regular and relatively free behavioral patterns of certain individuals who occupy various positions and exhibit behaviors in accordance with the demands of the roles they perform

(Amba, 1998:23). A role (role) is the dynamic aspect of an individual's status and occurs when a person executes their rights and duties according to their status (Soekanto, 2004:243). This indicates that a role is considered fulfilled when a person with a specific status has carried out their responsibilities. (Mokalu, Nayoan, and Sampe 2021)

According to Merton (Raho, 2007: 67), a role is defined as the pattern of behavior expected by society from someone holding a particular status, which also involves role-based relationships for someone with a certain social status. (Batita, Nayoan, and Tompodun 2017) A role is an illustration of social interaction in the terminology of actors who act according to predetermined roles. Based on this theory, the expectation of a role becomes a common understanding that guides individuals to behave in their daily lives. Individuals with certain roles, such as a doctor, teacher, student, parent, male, or female, are expected to behave according to their roles. (Linton, Cahyono, 2008: 194). It can thus be concluded that a role is a form of activity or action taken by an individual or a group of people to bring about a change desired by society based on the position or office held by an individual or group. When linked to governmental actions, a role can be described as a form of action taken by the government related to its position within the government.

The Role of Government in Reducing Stunting Involves Systematic Policy and Planning. The government's role in addressing stunting includes creating policies and systematic planning. For example, the government allocates specific funds for stunting, provides supplementary feeding (PMT), among other measures. According to Arief (2012) as cited by Damayanti et al. (n.d.), the roles of local government are fourfold:

1. As a regulator, the government's role is to set directions to balance the implementation of development through the issuance of regulations. As a regulator, the government provides a basic reference for the community as an instrument to regulate all activities of empowerment implementation.
2. As a dynamizer, the government acts to stimulate multi-party participation when there is stagnation in the development process (encouraging and maintaining regional development dynamics). As a dynamizer, the government plays a role by providing intensive and effective guidance and direction to the community. Guidance and direction are crucial in the dynamics of government through extension teams or specific agencies providing guidance and training to the community.
3. As a facilitator, the government's role is to create conducive conditions for the implementation of development to bridge various community interests in optimizing regional development. As a facilitator, the government operates in the field of mentoring through training, education, and skill enhancement, as well as in the area of funding or capitalization.
4. As a catalyst, the government positions itself as an agent that accelerates the development of regional and national potential that can then become social capital to build participation.

Therefore, the government plays a central role in reducing the prevalence of stunting through strategic policy formulation, resource allocation, and strengthening health services. A key step is the implementation of the National Stunting Reduction Acceleration Program (PPS), which is integrated across various sectors, including health, education, and sanitation. The government ensures that maternal and child health services, such as pregnancy checks, iron supplementation, and immunizations, are evenly available. Additionally, nutrition programs, such as providing supplementary feeding (PMT) for pregnant women and toddlers, are aimed at

meeting essential nutritional needs during the critical first 1000 days of life, crucial in preventing stunting. On the other hand, the government also plays a role in raising community awareness through education campaigns and socialization. Education about parenting, the importance of clean water and sanitation (WASH), and balanced nutrition is provided through community health centers, clinics, and schools. Local governments, with the support of the central government, are tasked with identifying high-risk stunting areas and directing specific interventions, such as training health cadres and involving local communities. Through national policy synergy and implementation at the local level, the government aims to achieve significant reductions in stunting prevalence according to national development targets. Given the issues at hand, the researchers are interested in exploring the title "The Role of Government in Reducing Stunting in Driyorejo Subdistrict, Gresik Regency." The purpose of this research is to describe and analyze the role of local government in reducing stunting in Driyorejo Subdistrict.

B. METHOD

1. Research Type

The type or method of research is a scientific way to obtain valid data with the purpose of discovering, developing, or proving specific knowledge so that it can ultimately be used to understand, solve, and anticipate problems in a certain field. The type of research that will be used in this study is qualitative research as material for analyzing an event or social phenomenon. Qualitative research was chosen because it aligns with the context of the research title, which is to explain various social phenomena in the research area. Therefore, the data, suitable for qualitative research, cannot be analyzed using a quantitative approach that refers to statistical data.

2. Research Focus

The focus of this study is on how local government roles in reducing stunting are according to Arif, where the first role of local government is as a regulator, the second as a dynamizer, the third as a facilitator, and the last as a catalyst.

3. Research Location

In this research, the location used as a place to collect information, interview sources and data as a component in completing research related to this policy is in Driyorejo District and the Driyorejo Community Health Center.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Local Government is the administration of government affairs by local governments and regional representative councils according to the principle of autonomy and the helping task with the broadest autonomy principle in the system and principles of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia as stipulated in the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. Currently, Local Government is regulated by Law 23 of 2014 about Regional Government.

According to the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, as explained in Law No. 32 of 2004, local governments have the authority to regulate and manage their own government affairs according to the principle of autonomy and helping tasks. Local government includes the Governor, Regent, or Mayor, and regional devices as elements of local government administration. In this context, the role of local government is everything done in the form of action methods in the exercise of regional autonomy as a right, authority, and obligation of local governments to

regulate and manage their own government affairs and the interests of the local community in accordance with legislation. According to Meenakshisundaram (in Jha and Mathur, 1999: 60) cited in (Prayudi 2019), several roles of local government in a decentralized government system include:

- a. Being an effective tool in facing local pressures by accommodating and articulating local interests, serving as a medium of political education for people who directly experience the implementation of government functions.
- b. Due to its proximity in location, the provision of services can be more efficient.
- c. Planning can be better because it is more aware of local conditions, with more efficient use of local resources as well.
- d. Government officials are more accountable due to closer relations with the public.
- e. Local governments can serve as an effective communication medium between the central government and local communities regarding central government programs in the regions.

Regarding the role of local government in providing public services, there are several matters that are within the authority of the regions in managing their own household affairs. According to Law No. 32 of 2004, the affairs under the authority of local governments include mandatory and optional affairs.

According to Law No. 32 of 2004 and Government Regulation No. 38 of 2007, health services are a mandatory local government affair that must be provided by provincial and municipal/district governments. Within the framework of regional autonomy, local governments have the authority to regulate government affairs of a local nature based on their own initiatives and the aspirations of the community (Podungge, 2011). Thus, decentralization embodies the autonomy of local communities to solve various problems and provide locally relevant services for the welfare of the concerned community. Therefore, community involvement is crucial in providing feedback on the quality of services they receive, so that the determination of public service quality is not only decided by the government or the service provider, but is determined together between the provider and the user, customer, client, or citizen as the community of service users. (Suryantoro and Kusdyana 2020)

In Indonesia's Stunting mitigation policy, the Ministry of Health has expanded the area for intervention implementation. In 2020, it encompassed 260 districts/cities, with plans to expand to all districts by 2024. This aligns with the government's target to reduce Stunting prevalence to 14% by 2024. The government has allocated a substantial budget, both through ministry/agency spending mechanisms and through the mechanism of Transfer to Regions and Village Funds (TKDD). In 2020, the government budget allocated for reducing Stunting through TKDD reached IDR 76.2 trillion, a significant amount. (Yulistivira, Ariany, and Putera 2023)

Now, in 2021, the budget allocated for reducing Stunting increased to IDR 86.2 trillion. This budget increase reflects the government's seriousness in reducing Stunting by 2024. In addition to central efforts, local governments also play a very important role in targeted Stunting mitigation efforts at all levels from provinces, districts/cities, to sub-districts and villages. In 2019, the government issued Ministry of Finance Regulation Number 61/PMK.07/2019, which sets guidelines for the use of transfer funds to support the implementation of Stunting prevention activities. (Yulistivira, Ariany, and Putera 2023)

In line with the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Village Affairs also included Stunting prevention as a priority for the use of village funds in 2019 and 2020. Additionally, to emphasize the use of village funds for Stunting prevention in each village, the Ministry of Finance established one of the document requirements for the disbursement of village funds to the State Treasury

Service Office (KPPN) as the convergence report on Stunting prevention at the village level. This report, submitted as a condition for the disbursement of phase II village funds, also serves as a form of monitoring the use of village funds in Stunting prevention. (Iin Puspita Sari, Moh Ali Murad, and Harnida Wahyuni Adda 2023).

The role of local government in integrated Stunting reduction actions, according to the Ministry of Home Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, involves the convergent execution of interventions by aligning planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring, and control of cross-sector activities as well as among levels of government and communities. The roles of local governments in this regard include:

1. The role of provincial governments includes: a) Facilitating coaching, monitoring, evaluation, and follow-up at the provincial level on policies and the implementation of programs and budgets for priority nutritional interventions in the districts/cities. b) Providing facilities and technical support to enhance the capacity of districts/cities in carrying out effective and efficient Convergence Actions. c) Coordinating the involvement of non-governmental institutions to support the Convergence Actions for accelerated Stunting prevention. d) Assisting the Ministry of Home Affairs in conducting performance assessments of districts/cities in the implementation of Stunting prevention, including providing feedback and awards to districts/cities based on the capacity of the respective province.
2. The role of district/city governments includes: a) Ensuring the planning and budgeting of programs/activities for priority interventions, especially in locations with high Stunting prevalence and/or significant gaps in service adequacy. b) Improving the management of services for priority nutritional interventions and ensuring that priority targets receive and utilize the provided intervention packages. As currently practiced by the Gresik Regency Government, which provides funds to each sub-district through the Health Department, namely community health centers to provide funds to villages for the provision of supplementary feeding every day for 45 days. c) Coordinating sub-districts and village governments in carrying out priority interventions, including optimizing resources, funding sources, and updating data (Directorate General of Regional Development, 2021).

The reduction of stunting rates is a national program based on Presidential Regulation No. 72 of 2021 by the Republic of Indonesia, targeting a stunting reduction to 14% by the year 2024. This regulation is directed at relevant agencies, with a designed program of stunting reduction interventions from the government involving various sectors and ministries. Since the stunting program commenced in 2018, the locations for stunting investigations have continually increased each year. In 2018, there were 100 districts in 34 provinces, expanded in 2019 to 160 districts/cities, further expanded to 260 districts or cities in 2020, and to 360 districts/cities in 2021 (tnp2k, 2017). The number of stunting reduction investigation locations has increased in pursuit of Indonesia's aspirations through Presidential Regulation 72 of 2021. With cooperation from all parties, it is hoped to achieve the sustainable development goals (SDGs) target of a reduction to 40% by the year 2025. (Rahmadani and Lubis 2023)

The government plays a central role in reducing stunting prevalence through the formulation of strategic policies, resource allocation, and strengthening health services. One major step is the implementation of national programs, such as the Accelerated Stunting Reduction Program (PPS) which is integrated across various sectors, including health, education, and

sanitation. The government ensures that maternal and child health services, such as pregnancy checks, iron supplementation, and immunizations, are evenly available. Additionally, nutritional programs, such as providing supplementary feeding (PMT) for pregnant women and toddlers, are aimed at meeting essential nutritional needs during the critical first 1000 days of life, which are crucial in preventing stunting.

On the other hand, the government also plays a role in raising community awareness through education campaigns and socialization. Education about parenting practices, the importance of clean water and sanitation (WASH), and balanced nutrition is provided through community health centers, clinics, and schools. Local governments, with support from the central government, are tasked with identifying high-stunting-risk areas and directing specific interventions, such as training health cadres and involving local communities. With the synergy of national policies and local implementation, the government strives to achieve a significant reduction in stunting prevalence in line with national development targets.

Stunting, characterized by impaired growth and development in children due to poor nutrition and repeated infections, has been a significant public health concern in Gresik Regency. In 2021, the Indonesian Nutrition Status Survey (SSGI) reported a stunting prevalence of 23% in Gresik, aligning with East Java's average of 23.5% and slightly below the national average of 24.4%. (Najah et al. 2024)

Additionally, the government has focused on integrated stunting prevention policies, particularly in areas like Driyorejo District, which has a relatively high number of stunting cases. Efforts include coordination among regional organizations, socialization programs, and community involvement to address the multifaceted causes of stunting. These concerted efforts have yielded positive outcomes. By 2023, the prevalence of stunting in Gresik Regency decreased to 10.7%, demonstrating the effectiveness of the implemented strategies. (Udzrotu Shauma dan Gandini Purbaningrum 2022). The following is data on the reduction in stunting rates in Gresik Regency in the last few years:

Table 1. data on the reduction in stunting rates in Gresik Regency

No	Year	Prevelensi Stunted
1	2021	23%
2	2022	10,7%
3	2023	10,3%
4	2024	15,4%

Source: Gresikkab.go.id

Here is a summary of the research results and the steps taken by the Gresik Regency Government in reducing stunting prevalence in general and also implemented in the Driyorejo district of Gresik.

1. **Data-Based Approach and Program Convergence** Gresik Regency has identified 10 priority sub-districts for stunting intervention, one of which is Driyorejo Sub-district, focusing on programs based on valid data. This effort involves cross-organizational coordination within the Regional Device Organizations (OPD) to ensure the program is integrated. The main focus is on nutrition improvement, parenting education, and strengthening health services,

including through counseling and providing protein-rich supplementary feeding to children at risk of stunting in Driyorejo Sub-district, Gresik Regency. The Driyorejo Sub-district government plays an active role in reducing stunting prevalence through various programs and collaborative approaches. One of the main initiatives is the Cetingan Papa Kepo (Prevent Stunting with Papaya, Pandan, Moringa, and Family Support) program. This program involves nutritionists and medical personnel from local health centers to ensure the local food used has the right nutritional content to support child growth. This approach has helped reduce the stunting rate in Driyorejo from 10% in 2021 to 7.4% in 2022, although fluctuations in the number of stunting cases still occur. This is depicted in the following graph:



Figure 1 Stunting Chart of Subdistricts in Driyorejo, 2023

2. Foster Father Program and Food Assistance An innovative program is the Foster Father movement, involving community contributions to support the animal protein needs of children at risk of stunting. Additionally, the government collaborates with various parties such as the Post Office and Baznas in the distribution of food aid, including eggs, chicken, mung beans, and milk. This approach aims to improve the nutritional intake of families at risk of stunting. The program involves community participation, particularly philanthropists, who act as foster fathers for children at risk of stunting. They donate funds of IDR 10,000 per day to help meet the children's animal protein needs, such as eggs, chicken, and milk. This stimulant program lasts for 90 days, focusing on improving the children's nutritional intake. Furthermore, child growth and development are regularly measured by health cadres using adequate tools.
3. Role of the Family Support Team (TPK) This team provides counseling about the importance of the First 1000 Days of Life (HPK), facilitates health services, and conducts surveillance for families at risk of stunting. They also assist in the distribution of social aid tailored to the needs of at-risk children, such as the regular delivery of government food reserves.

In Driyorejo Sub-district, upstream interventions are also prioritized, such as providing iron supplementation pills to adolescent girls to prevent anemia, which can contribute to the future risk of stunting in children. Downstream, the government supports the provision of nutritious supplementary feeding (PMT) to children and pregnant women. These efforts are carried out in conjunction with posyandu cadres, PKK, and village apparatus to ensure targeted and sustainable aid. The synergy between the sub-district government, villages, and

health workers is continually strengthened through socialization and education on the importance of meeting nutritional needs. Based on the stunting prevalence chart for each village in Driyorejo District, according to the e-PPGBM results in August 2023, there is still one village whose stunting rate is approaching the maximum limit. Even though the maximum limit for stunting in a region is 16%. The two villages that are the main locus for efforts to reduce stunting in Driyorejo District are Wedoroanom Village and Randegansari Village, each of which has a stunting prevalence of 15.20% and 11.90%. This figure has decreased from the previous year which reached 20.9% and 16.1%. This is depicted in the following graph:

Table 2. data on the reduction in stunting rates in Gresik Regency

Number	Village	The Number Of Toddlers Is Very Short	Number Of Stunted Toddlers	Number Of Stunted Toddlers (%)
1	Driyorejo	5	18	7,3
2	Cangkor	4	19	6,8
3	Bambe	10	46	8,7
4	Tenaru	4	4	2,8
5	Mulung	6	25	9,9
6	Petiken	1	36	4,4
7	Kesamben Wetan	3	12	3,6
8	Wedoroanom	6	53	15.2
9	Rande Gangsari	6	53	11,9
10	Gadung	17	29	8,4

Source: Gresikkab.go.id

Currently, the Gresik Regency Government, especially the Driyorejo Community Health Center, has made efforts to reduce the stunting rate which is still high. The Gresik government focuses this program on areas that have high rates of stunting. From the available data, Driyorejo sub-district is one of the sub-districts that has a stunting distribution rate that is still quite high. Based on the problems that occur, the focus of this research is to find out how stunting prevention is implemented through the accelerated stunting reduction program in Driyorejo District, guided by Gresik Regent Regulation Number 9 of 2023 regarding the Acceleration of Integrated Stunting Reduction in Gresik Regency. These steps demonstrate that collaboration between the government, community, and private sector is crucial in significantly reducing stunting rates in Driyorejo Sub-district. With this commitment and innovation, the Driyorejo Sub-district government strives to create a sustainable trend of stunting reduction while empowering the community to independently support the health of the younger generation.

CONCLUSION

The Driyorejo Sub-district government has successfully played a strategic role in reducing stunting through a collaborative and innovative program approach. The Foster Father program, which involves the community in supporting children's nutritional needs, has proven effective in increasing protein intake in children at risk of stunting. Over the 90-day intervention period, the

results show an improvement in children's nutrition, supported by government efforts to provide measurement tools and monitor progress regularly. Furthermore, the government has demonstrated commitment through Food Assistance, systematically distributed to families at risk of stunting. Supplies such as eggs, chicken, mung beans, and milk not only meet nutritional needs but also help families improve their dietary patterns. The integration of this program is supported by cross-sector involvement, such as collaborations with the Post Office and Baznas, and synergy with health cadres to facilitate education and health monitoring. In conclusion, the government's role in community-based programs and food assistance distribution in Driyorejo Sub-district has successfully created an effective intervention model for reducing stunting rates. The collaboration between the government, community, and relevant institutions demonstrates the importance of a holistic approach in sustainably addressing this public health issue.

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